

# Tuskegee Airmen

*America's African-American Air Force Units of World War II*

## SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY

In 1997, Dr. Benjamin F. Payton, President of Tuskegee University, and United States Representative Bob Riley, 3rd District, Alabama, requested that the National Park Service (NPS) prepare a Special Resource Study of how best to interpret and celebrate the role of the Tuskegee Airmen in World War II and their initial training at Moton Field. The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) provided a \$75,000 grant for printing, travel, and the bulk of salary cost for NPS project personnel. The NPS Southeast Regional Office, Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, Tuskegee University, and the State of Alabama furnished additional staff support for the preparation of the report.



Area Map of Moton Field in Alabama

a reconnaissance survey in which the study team collects basic information and assesses the resource's significance. If the area appears to have potential as a unit of the National Park System, a detailed study of management alternatives is then conducted. This brochure provides a brief summary of the material covered in the study and presents alternatives to commemorate the Tuskegee Airmen and Moton Field.



The purpose of the study is to evaluate the potential of adding Moton Field in Tuskegee, Alabama, to the National Park System to commemorate the role of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II. In accordance with the NPS planning process, the study is a fact-finding effort based on readily available information, and is used to determine if the area resources have national significance and the

suitability/feasibility of including the area in the National Park System. The planning process begins with



Moton Field  
During  
World War II

## The Tuskegee Airmen

The valuable contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen have only recently been acknowledged through personal memoirs, documentaries, television dramas, and scholarly studies. The presence of these African-American fighter pilots in the Army Air Corps (Army Air Forces) and their exemplary combat activities remained largely unknown during, and even after World War II. Nicknamed the "Lonely Eagles," the Tuskegee Airmen overcame the "separate but equal" conditions sanctioned by the United States Army to become one of the most highly respected and honored fighter groups. According to official military records, the Tuskegee Airmen of the 99th Fighter Squadron and the 332nd Fighter Group completed 1,578 missions, destroyed over 260 enemy aircraft, sank one enemy destroyer, and demolished numerous enemy installations. For their efforts, these airmen received 95 Distinguished Flying Crosses, as well as Legions of Merit, Silver Stars, Purple Hearts, the Croix De Guerre,

*"They rose from adversity through competence, courage, commitment, and capacity to serve America on silver wings, and to set a standard few will transcend."*

Tuskegee Airmen Statue of United States Air Force Academy



and the Red Star of Yugoslavia. Moreover, according to numerous accounts, the men of the 332nd Fighter Group never lost a bomber to enemy fighters while escorting the 15th Air Force on bombing missions. This earned the Tuskegee Airmen the respect of American bomber crews, who called them the "Red-tail Angels" after their distinctive red tail markings, as well as the German Luftwaffe, who referred to the men as the "Schwartzes Vogelmenschen," or "Black Airmen." The accomplishments of these airmen also represent a peak in the struggle by African Americans to participate in the U.S. armed forces; their combat successes proved to military leaders that, if given the opportunity, African Americans could become effective military leaders and combat veterans.

The story of the Tuskegee Airmen and their exemplary record is virtually unknown to most Americans. Few scholarly works deal with the history of the airmen and their primary flight training at Moton Field. Consequently, NPS historians consulted various primary and secondary sources such as military records, newspapers, photographs, documentaries, books, and film footage. These historians also gathered information from the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University, the



National Archives, the Library of Congress, Tuskegee University Archives, and the Air Force Historical Research Agency at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. To further their understanding of the Tuskegee Airmen, the NPS study team also conducted a workshop with several airmen at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, Georgia, and sent many of the airmen a questionnaire for their input and insight into this project. From the information gathered, the National Park Service concluded that the "Tuskegee Airmen Experience" extends beyond the combat exploits of the pilots who served in the 99th Fighter Squadron and the 332nd Fighter Group and should include the

477th Bombardment Group, which fought for equal rights within the Army Air Forces system, and the thousands of men and women who served in civilian and military support groups. This story also deals with the history and development of Tuskegee Institute, now known as Tuskegee University, and its efforts to establish a flight training program for African Americans. The history of these men and women and their fight to join the Army Air Corps (Army Air Forces) and to prove their worth to their country, as well as their struggle for equal rights in both the military and society must be preserved for the American public.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

### African Americans in the Military

African-American men and women have continually played a significant role in the United States military and its colonial predecessors. They not only fought to enter the armed forces, but when finally accepted by the government, they had to work under segregated and unequal conditions and prove their abilities. This internal battle continued through the late seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, up into the first half of the twentieth century. Both free and enslaved Africans and African Americans fought in colonial wars, and continued to support European nations and the United States in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. For example, by the end of Revolutionary War, approximately 5,000 African Americans had served in the Continental Army and Navy, while thousands fought for the British cause. Although the extent of African-American participation in the War of

1812 is unclear, scholars estimate that approximately 15 to 20% of the men in the navy were black. Moreover, two African-American units merged to form the Free Negro Battalion which, with the aid of another 500 black soldiers, helped Andrew Jackson defeat the British at the Battle of New Orleans (1815).

Many of these African Americans fought in these conflicts for two reasons: to defeat the enemy and to earn freedom, equality, and respect for their race. They achieved some social gains for their sacrifices, for many of them were rewarded with immediate or gradual freedom. Nonetheless, only a few African Americans benefited from this privilege compared with the millions that remained enslaved. By the start of the Civil War in 1861, more than four million African Americans were held in bondage while less than a half million had obtained their freedom. The Civil War, however, offered many enslaved African Americans an opportunity to fight for freedom. Many





Moton Field During World War II

slaves escaped from their masters, sought refuge within Union lines, and offered their services to the cause. Black troops, however, were initially placed in non-combatant roles such as cooks, waiters, or orderlies, or performed menial tasks such as building fortifications and roads, or digging canals and trenches. By 1863, the North realized the need for additional manpower and began to enlist African Americans in the military in greater numbers. For example, the famed Massachusetts 54th Regiment,\* depicted recently in the widely viewed movie "Glory," was an African-American combat unit organized by the Union army. Nonetheless, black soldiers continued to encounter blatant racism, discrimination, and segregation, and were assigned menial tasks, although some eventually joined cavalry, infantry, and light and heavy artillery units as the war progressed. Meanwhile, black volunteers such as Harriet Tubman offered their services as spies, nurses, and scouts for the Union cause. In all, about 10,000 African Americans served in the United States Navy (composing 8% of the entire naval forces), while another 186,000 fought in the army. By the end of the Civil War, African Americans comprised 10% of the Union forces, while constituting 2% of the population in the North.

Like their predecessors, these African-American men and women usually had two motives behind their participation in these wars: to defeat America's military enemy and to defeat America's racism in order to win freedom and equality for African Americans. At the end of the war, Congress permanently abolished slavery and granted more than four million African Americans liberty, citizenship, and the right to vote. For many African Americans, these rights were merely an illusion, and many of them still encountered racial discrimination within the military and in society as a whole. Only a few African Americans in the armed forces obtained officer or specialized

training, and many black soldiers did not receive the necessary equipment to adequately prepare them for combat. When the Spanish-American War began in 1898, only one African-American West Point graduate, Charles Young, had a position as an active line officer in the military. Racial discrimination meant that only a few African Americans served as officers in the Spanish American War. Most military leaders felt that African Americans lacked the intelligence, bravery, leadership, and combat skills to join the regular army, especially as officers. Nonetheless, between 8,000 and 10,000 black soldiers served in the Spanish American War, many of them aiding Theodore Roosevelt's "Rough Riders" at Las Guasimas and San Juan Hill.

Although Woodrow Wilson promised to "make the world safe for democracy," African-American soldiers fared only slightly better in World War I. Whereas, two million African Americans responded to the Selective Service Act of 1917, the military accepted only 400,000 black recruits. Many of these men were assigned to non-combatant roles and menial tasks, while the Marine Corps and Army Air Corps simply banned African Americans altogether by claiming that they lacked the qualifications for combat duty. In addition, racial discrimination restricted the few African-American officers to commanding all-black units, for the military did not want black officers leading white troops. The army even reorganized and attached several units of African-American soldiers and officers to the French Army, which not only treated these soldiers fairly, but also awarded a regiment known as the "Harlem Hell Fighters" the distinguished Croix De Guerre.

While these African Americans fought for democracy and the rights of oppressed peoples abroad, they received few freedoms or civil liberties in the United States. The armed forces used the now discredited 1925 War College Study regarding the use of black troops as an excuse to deny African Americans positions of leadership and skill in the military, and continued to reduce the number of existing black units. The Army Air Corps and the Marine Corps remained closed to African Americans while the Coast Guard admitted only a few men to low-level positions. The struggle of African Americans to join the Air Corps and become combat pilots during World War II played out against this background of official discrimination.



Moton Field, Hangar No. 1 During World War II



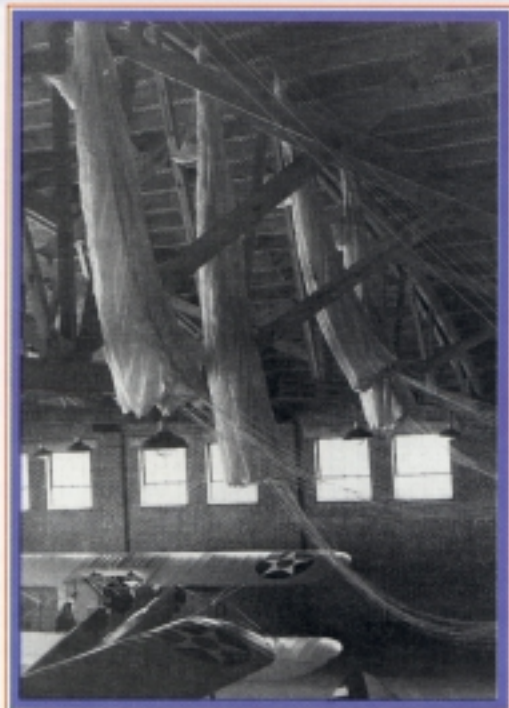
\* The bravery of the Massachusetts 54th Regiment is celebrated in the first public monument in America to honor African Americans which stands across from the Massachusetts State Capitol on Boston Common.



## African Americans in Aviation

Although the historic flight of Orville and Wilbur Wright in 1903 sparked a nation-wide interest in aviation, racial discrimination hindered African Americans from fully participating in this new field. Like the military, many Americans thought that African Americans lacked the mental capabilities, aptitude, and reflexes to fly and excluded these men and women from flight instruction. The few African Americans who learned to fly in the early twentieth century were self-taught or traveled abroad to receive formal training. After Charles Lindbergh's famous flight of 1927, African Americans

became interested in aviation in increasing numbers and began to form aviation clubs and schools so others could learn to fly. However, the United States government did not sponsor flight training for African Americans until 1939 with the passage of the Civilian Pilot Training Act, which authorized certain schools to provide Civilian Pilot Training Programs (or CPT programs) to create a surplus of pilots in case of a national emergency. The Civil Aeronautics Association (or CAA) selected six black colleges, Howard University, Delaware State College, Hampton Institute, North Carolina A & T, West Virginia State College, and Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University), to participate in this program. The federal government paid for ground and flight school instruction for the CPT candidates, while the schools provided instructors, physical examinations for the prospective students, and transportation to the CAA-approved flying fields for flight instruction. By the



Parachutes drying at Moton Field, circa 1941

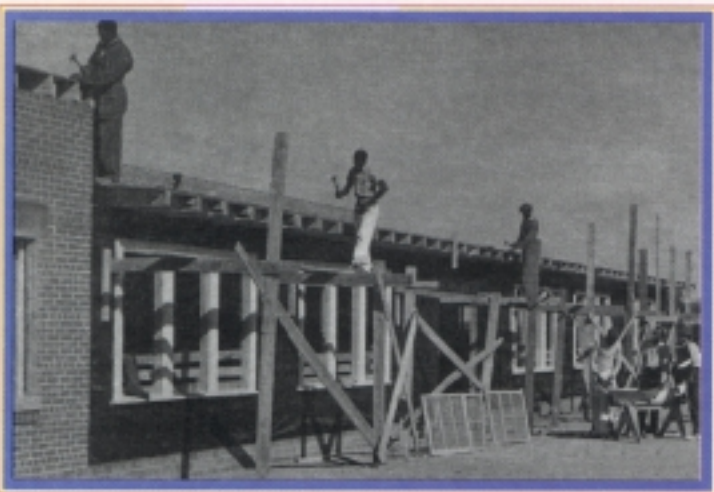
end of May 1940, the first class of CPT students at Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University) had completed their instruction and all but one passed the flight exam. With a successful primary flight training program, Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University) decided to expand its CPT program to teach secondary classes, and thus became the center of African-American aviation in the South.

Although African Americans had made some advances in civilian aviation through the CPT program, the Army Air Corps still excluded them. However, after much pressure from the black press and civil rights groups such as the NAACP, the military finally decided to establish an all-black pursuit squadron based in Tuskegee, Alabama. Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University) received a contract from the military to provide primary flight training, while the army built a separate air base, Tuskegee Army Air Field, for

advanced training. Technical training for the support personnel was completed at Chanute Field in Illinois. The Air Corps assigned three officers to oversee the training at Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University), provided the aircraft, and furnished the cadets with textbooks, flying clothes, parachutes, and mechanics suits, while Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University), the civilian contractor, provided full facilities for the aircraft and personnel, including quarters and a mess for the cadets, hangars and maintenance shops, and offices for Air Corps personnel, flight instructors, ground school instructors, and mechanics. Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University) then received financing from the Julius Rosenwald Fund and built Moton Field to house the flight school operations. The institute selected African-American contractors to design and build the facility, while skilled workers and students from Tuskegee helped complete the field, which was dedicated in 1943 in honor of Robert Moton, the second president of Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University).

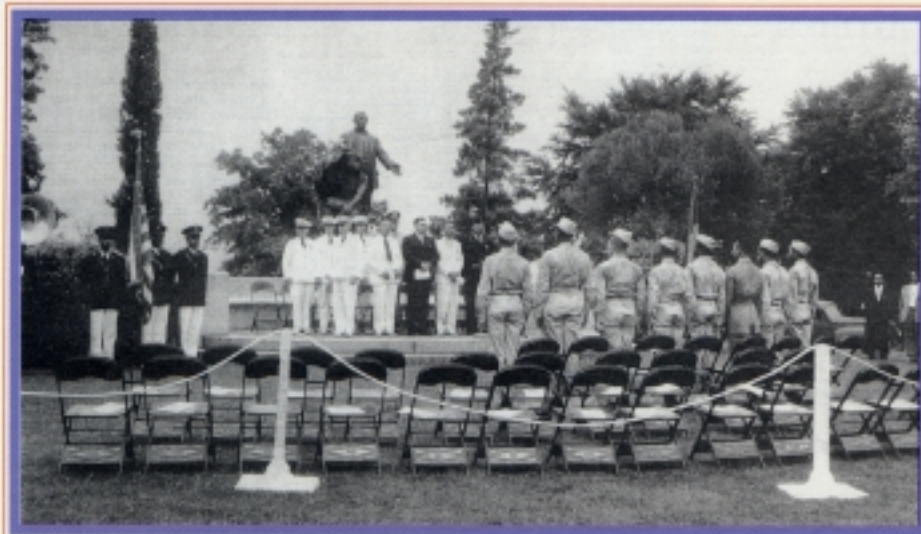
## The Tuskegee Airmen

On July 19, 1941, twelve aviation cadets and one student officer, Captain Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., reported to Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University) to begin flight training as the first class of African-American pilot candidates in the U.S. military. By November, only six of these cadets had demonstrated the necessary skills, passed the training course, and were transferred to Tuskegee Army Air Field to complete their pilot training with the Army Air Corps (Army Air Forces). On March 7, 1942, the first class of African-American aviation cadets graduated from Tuskegee Army Air Field and became the nation's first black military pilots. The significance of this event should not be underestimated—after years of struggle, African



Construction of Hangar No. 2, Moton Field, circa 1942-1943





Address of welcome to Air Corps cadets in front of Booker T. Washington Monument on the grounds of Tuskegee Institute, circa 1941

Americans were finally accepted and commissioned as **pilots and officers** in the United States Army. The successful training of these pilots at Tuskegee, coupled with the United States' entry into World War II, led the military to expand its African-American aviation program. Consequently, the Army Air Forces established another African-American unit, the 332nd Fighter Group, and began plans for a segregated medium bomber group known as the 477th Bombardment Group.

Despite the advances in African-American military aviation, it still remained to be seen whether these pilots would be used in combat beside white pilots and soldiers to defend the country in World War II. Although the 99th Fighter Squadron had completed its training by Spring 1942, it was not until April 1943 that the army sent the unit to North Africa for combat duty. For several months, the squadron patrolled North Africa and the Mediterranean without scoring a single victory. Finally, on July 2, 1943, the unit shot down its first enemy aircraft. The lack of combat victories, however, led several military leaders to question the squadron's abilities. When Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., returned to the United



Air Corps cadets reporting to Captain Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., commandant of cadets, circa 1941

States in August 1943 to assume command of the 332nd Fighter Group, a Senate Advisory Committee called upon him to answer questions concerning the 99th

squadron's performance. Based upon the committee's findings, the Army Air Forces proceeded with plans to establish an African-American medium bomber group and sent the 332nd Fighter Group to the Mediterranean to test their combat skills.

Although the racial attitudes and discriminatory behavior of some Army Air Forces officials and military leaders led them to question the performance of the Tuskegee Airmen, the unit scored a series of victories in 1944 and changed public opinion concerning their aggressiveness. Allied Forces landed at Anzio on January 21, 1944, in hopes of furthering their campaign on the mainland of Italy. The 99th squadron participated

in this attack, and by February 10, 1944, the unit had 17 confirmed kills, 4 probable victories, and 6 damaged enemy aircraft. As news of the success of the Tuskegee Airmen reached military leaders, many formerly opposed to the group began to favor them and praise their achievements, as well as include them in more vital missions. More importantly, the Tuskegee Airmen earned the respect of several bomber crews, who began to depend upon the coverage provided by the group and called them the "Red-tail Angels."



Captain Benjamin Oliver Davis, Jr. of Washington, D.C., climbing into an Advanced Trainer, circa 1942

Unlike the 99th Fighter Squadron and the 332nd Fighter Group, the 477th Bombardment Group remained in the United States throughout the war. While the bomber group did not have the combat success or receive international recognition like the fighter unit, they staged an important protest for equal rights at Freeman Field, Indiana. Members of the 477th, frustrated with their "separate but equal" training conditions, decided to desegregate the all-white officers' club at Freeman Field, which was a particular affront since official army regulations prohibited the segregation of recreational facilities. Although 36 officers were placed under arrest for disobeying orders to leave the club, the army merely reprimanded the men and dropped the charges against them. This early non-violent protest within the Army Air Forces system was a significant precedent for the later civil rights movement.

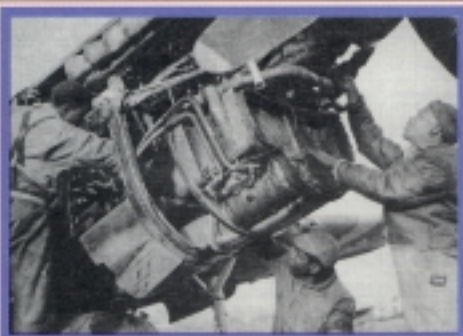


## Significance of the Tuskegee Airmen and Moton Field

After researching such a broad and significant story, the NPS study team realized the importance of the Tuskegee Airmen and Moton Field, the site of primary flight training for these African-American pilots. The meaning of this air field extends to include the 477th Bombardment Group and their struggle for equal rights within the Army Air Forces, as well as the important participation of Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University) and supportive Americans in the struggle for full African-American participation in the military.

Significant points concerning the history of the Tuskegee Airmen are:

1. The struggle of African Americans for greater roles in North American military conflicts spans the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Opportunities for African-American participation in the U.S. military were always very limited and controversial. Quotas, exclusion, and racial discrimination were based on the prevailing attitude in the United States, particularly on the part of the U.S. military, that African Americans did not possess the intellectual capacity, aptitude, and skills to be successful fighters. Political pressure exerted by the black press and civil rights groups resulted in the formation of the Tuskegee Airmen, making them an excellent example of the struggle by African Americans to serve in the United States military.



Sharing credit for African-American fighter pilots' victory over Nazis are mechanics George Johnson... and James C. Howard... Their outfit, the 99th Fighter Squadron, bagged 12 Nazi fighter planes in two days, circa 1944

2. In the early 1940s, key leaders within the United States Army Air Corps (Army Air Forces), as well as the majority of white Americans, did not believe that African Americans had the intellectual capacity to become successful military pilots. After succumbing to the pressure exerted by civil rights groups and black leaders, the army decided to train a small number of African-American pilot cadets under special conditions. Although prejudice and discrimination against African Americans was a national phenomenon, not just a southern trait, it was more intense in the South where it had hardened into rigidly-enforced patterns of segregation to protect white privilege. Such was the environment that the military chose to locate the training of the Tuskegee Airmen.

3. The military selected Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University) as a civilian contractor for a variety of reasons.



Pilots of a U.S. Army Air Forces fighter squadron, credited with shooting down 8 of the 28 German planes destroyed in dogfights over the new Allied beachheads south of Rome, on January 27, 1944, talk over the day's exploits at a U.S. base in the Mediterranean theater. African-American members of this squadron, veterans of the North African and Sicilian campaigns, were formerly classmates at a university in the southern U.S.

These included the school's existing facilities, engineering and technical instructors, and a climate with ideal flying conditions year round. Tuskegee Institute's (Tuskegee University's) strong interest in providing aeronautical training for African-American youths was also an important factor. Tuskegee's students and faculty had designed and constructed Moton Field as a site for its military pilot training program and named it for the school's second president, Robert Russa Moton. Students from the school's civilian pilot training program had some of the best test scores when compared to other students from programs across the southeast.

4. In 1941 the Army Air Corps (Army Air Forces) awarded a contract to Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University) to operate a primary flight school at Moton Field. Consequently, Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University) was one of a very few American institutions — and the only African-American institution — to own, develop, and control facilities for military flight instruction.

5. Moton Field, also known as the Primary Flying Field or Airport Number 2, was the only primary flight training



Moton Field Aerial, circa 1943





Current photo of Moton Field, Hangar No. 1

facility for African-American pilot candidates in the U.S. Army Air Corps (Army Air Forces) during World War II. Thus, the facility symbolizes the entrance of African-American pilots into the Army Air Corps (Army Air Forces) and the singular role of Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University) in providing economic and educational resources to make that entry possible, although on a segregated basis.

6. The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African-American soldiers to successfully complete their training and enter the Army Air Corps (Army Air Forces). Almost 1,000 aviators were produced as America's first African-American military pilots. In addition, more than 10,000 military and civilian African-American men and women served as flight instructors, officers, bombardiers, navigators, radio technicians, mechanics, air traffic controllers, parachute riggers, electrical and communications specialists, medical professionals, laboratory assistants, cooks, musicians, supply, fire-fighting and transportation personnel.

7. Although military leaders, blinded by racist concepts of white superiority and African-American inferiority, were hesitant to use the Tuskegee Airmen in combat, the airmen eventually saw considerable action in North Africa and Europe. Acceptance from Army Air Forces units came slowly, but their courageous and, in many cases, heroic performance earned them increased combat opportunities and respect.

8. The successes of the Tuskegee Airmen proved to the American public that African Americans, when given the opportunity, could become effective military leaders and pilots. This helped pave the way for desegregation of the military, beginning with President Harry S. Truman's Executive Order 9811 in 1948. It also helped set the stage for civil rights advocates to continue the struggle to end racial discrimination during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Consequently, the story of the Tuskegee Airmen constitutes a powerful and seminal

metaphor for the struggle for black freedom in America.

9. The Tuskegee Airmen also reflect the struggle of African Americans to achieve equal rights, not only through legal attacks on the system of segregation, but also through the techniques of nonviolent direct action aimed at dismantling white privilege in the military. The members of the 477th Bombardment Group, who staged a non-violent demonstration to desegregate the officers' club at Freeman Field, Indiana, helped set the pattern for direct action protests popularized by civil rights activists in later decades.

## The Resource: Moton Field

Named in honor of Robert Russa Moton, the second president of Tuskegee Institute, Moton Field was built between 1940 and 1942 by Tuskegee Institute with financing from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. Because the facility was an army contract flight school, Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama, provided technical assistance in selecting and mapping the site. Edward C. Miller, an architect, and G. L. Washington, an engineer who served as Director of Mechanical Industries at Tuskegee Institute, designed many of the structures at the air field. The school also selected Archie A. Alexander, an engineer and contractor, to build the air field, and Alexander began construction on the flight school facilities in June 1941. Inclement weather caused several building delays, and student laborers and skilled workers from Tuskegee Institute helped finish the field so flight training could begin on time. When Tuskegee Institute finally completed the facility, it included two hangars for aircraft, a control tower, a locker building, a club house, several wood buildings for offices and supplies, a few brick structures for storage, and an area for vehicles and their maintenance.

A recent fire, however, destroyed a hangar at Moton Field (Hangar No. 2) and damaged the adjacent control tower. Time and neglect have also caused several buildings to fall into ruin, while others have been demolished. Only nine of the fifteen known structures at Moton Field during World War II remain. Many of these structures have deteriorated and need immediate repair, while one of them has been altered from its original appearance and use. Nonetheless, many of the historic landscape features at the field, such as the reservoir, gasoline pits and fuel storage facilities, the paved aircraft area between the hangars, the taxiway to the air field, vehicle areas, and curbs and road beds, are still visible and contribute to the character of the historic site. Unless some form of resource protection is established, the historic structures and landscape features at Moton Field are in danger of further decay and will be lost to future generations.



# NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE, SUITABILITY AND FEASIBILITY

**A**n area must meet all criteria for national significance, suitability and feasibility as a prerequisite for inclusion in the National Park System. The following discussion summarizes the findings for the various criteria.

## National Significance

**T**o qualify for consideration as a potential addition to the National Park System an area must meet each of four criteria for national significance. An area must be an outstanding example of a type of resource, possess exceptional values for interpretation, provide superlative opportunities for public use and enjoyment, and retain integrity as a true, accurate and relatively unspoiled example of a type of resource. Moton Field and the history of the Tuskegee Airmen meet each of these criteria.

## Suitability

**A**n understanding of suitability must be based on how well the history represented at Moton Field compares with that covered by existing areas of the National Park System. To be considered suitable for inclusion in the system, an area must represent a cultural theme or type of resource that is not already adequately represented in the system or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by another land managing entity. Based on the following findings, it is recommended that Moton Field is suitable as an addition to the National Park System.

1. The National Park System includes several sites related to World War II. However, none of these sites deal with military training or military pilot training.
2. Of the 67 National Park Service units that are directly and indirectly associated with African-American heritage, none of these units have as their primary mission, or deal directly with, the interpretation of military pilot training for African Americans in World War II. The struggle for African-American participation in the U.S. military is not addressed in detail in current NPS units.
3. While it may appear that current National Historic Landmarks adequately represent people and events associated with World War II, none of these sites were designated National Historic Landmarks because they relate directly to the training of African-American military pilots.
4. Only one National Historic Landmark, the Fort Des Moines Provisional Army Officer Training School in Des Moines, Iowa, relates to training of African Americans for military duty. Created during World War I, the

school marked both the U.S. Army's first recognition of its responsibility to train African-American officers as well as the establishment of a military tradition among African Americans.

5. The story of the Tuskegee Airmen and Moton Field is also not adequately represented or protected by any other land managing entity. Exhibits on the Tuskegee Airmen have been assembled at various locations around the United States. While these exhibits are well done, they are very limited in their treatment of the story. They cannot be considered comparable to the interpretive values that can be derived from presentation of the story at Moton Field where training actually occurred.
6. Another issue related to suitability is the relationship of Moton Field to the existing Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site (NHS). Moton Field has a strong and direct relationship to Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) and, therefore, to the purposes for which the NHS was established. Should Moton Field not be added to the National Park System as a separate unit, it would be suitable as a noncontiguous addition to the existing NHS.

## Feasibility

**T**o be considered feasible as a new unit of the National Park System, an area must be of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure long-term protection of historic settings and/or natural systems and to accommodate public use. It also must have the potential for efficient administration at a reasonable cost. Factors to be considered include size and configuration, boundary, land ownership and availability, costs for acquisition and development, access, threats to the resource, and the effects of the plans of others on the site. Based on an analysis of these factors, it is recommended that Moton Field would be a feasible addition to the National Park System.

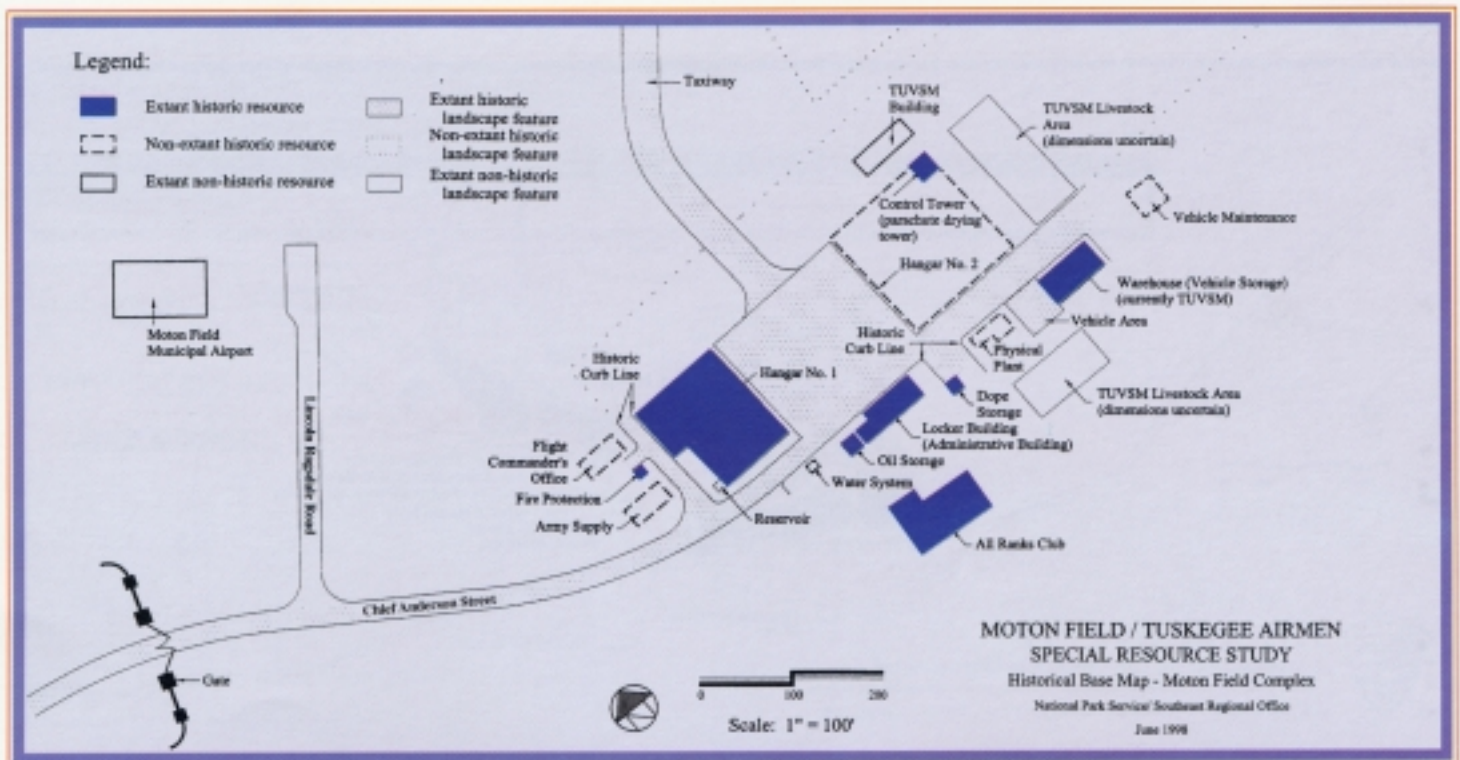
## MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

**T**he following alternatives describe different ways of commemorating, interpreting and preserving resources associated with the Tuskegee Airmen at Moton Field. The concepts are the result of extensive historical research as well as input from the Tuskegee Airmen, public agencies, private organizations, Tuskegee University and individual citizens. The alternatives represent a progression toward a greater ability to tell more of the story of the Tuskegee Airmen at Moton Field.



## Actions Common to Each Alternative

1. "Chief" Anderson Street would be used as a pedestrian walkway for visitors and service vehicle access to the historic building complex.
2. Historic entrance gate would be rehabilitated to its original appearance.
3. Existing airport access road would be removed by the City of Tuskegee and a new road built by the city on city property.
4. Screening of the municipal airport from the historic complex would be provided through planting of trees and other vegetation. Alternatives C and D involve greater protection for the broad historic landscape/setting.
5. A monument to the Tuskegee Airmen would be provided in each alternative but in different locations and configurations. The design of the monument(s) could include statuary to commemorate the airmen as a group as well as the important roles played by individuals such as Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., "Chief" Anderson, primary pilot instructor at Moton Field, and others.
6. In the historic complex, varying degrees of preservation treatment for historic resources would be provided. Actions would range from marking "footprints" of former historic buildings on the ground to stabilization or complete rehabilitation of existing historic structures. Historic taxiway, pathways and paved areas would be preserved. Wayside exhibits would also be located at each building site to provide information on the use of each structure.
7. Other sites related to the history of the Tuskegee Airmen, including Chehaw and Tuskegee Army Air Field, would be interpreted. In Alternatives A and B, this would be handled by the State of Alabama through written agreements with the current property owners. The National Park Service would assume this role in Alternatives C and D.
8. Tuskegee University campus sites and buildings related to the Tuskegee Airmen would be interpreted by NPS.
9. For Alternatives B, C and D, Moton Field would become a unit of the National Park System. The NPS unit envisioned in Alternative D would include a Tuskegee Airmen National Center. In each case, National Park Service operation and management would be based at the existing Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site.
10. Costs for construction of facilities are shown for each alternative based on NPS guidelines for total gross costs (including net construction, advance planning, construction supervision and contingencies). It is anticipated that a partnership arrangement for the sharing of these costs will be developed. In addition to NPS, other federal, state, local agencies and private organizations may provide portions of these costs. In these cases, the actual cost of construction for various facilities may be less than the estimates presented in this report.



Historical Base Map



# ALTERNATIVE A—COMMEMORATION/INFORMATION: MOTON FIELD

## Visitor Experience

- Enhanced highway rest area; not a unit of the National Park System.
- Passive commemoration: marking of site as remnant landscape.
- Little interpretation of Tuskegee Airmen history.

## Interpretive Emphasis

- Focus on basic data/information on Moton Field as training site.

## Historic Building Complex

- Stabilization of existing historic buildings.
- Mark footprints of former historic structures.

## Interpretive Facilities/Tools

- Small information-orientation structure near visitor parking.
- Self-guiding brochure and wayside exhibits.
- Written publications (available at Carver Museum/Tuskegee Institute NHS).

## Portion of Tuskegee Airmen Story Told Through Moton Field Resources and Facilities

- 10-15 percent.
- Visitor understanding of rest of story would rely heavily on reading of publications.

## Management/Operation

- Tuskegee University

## Construction of Facilities

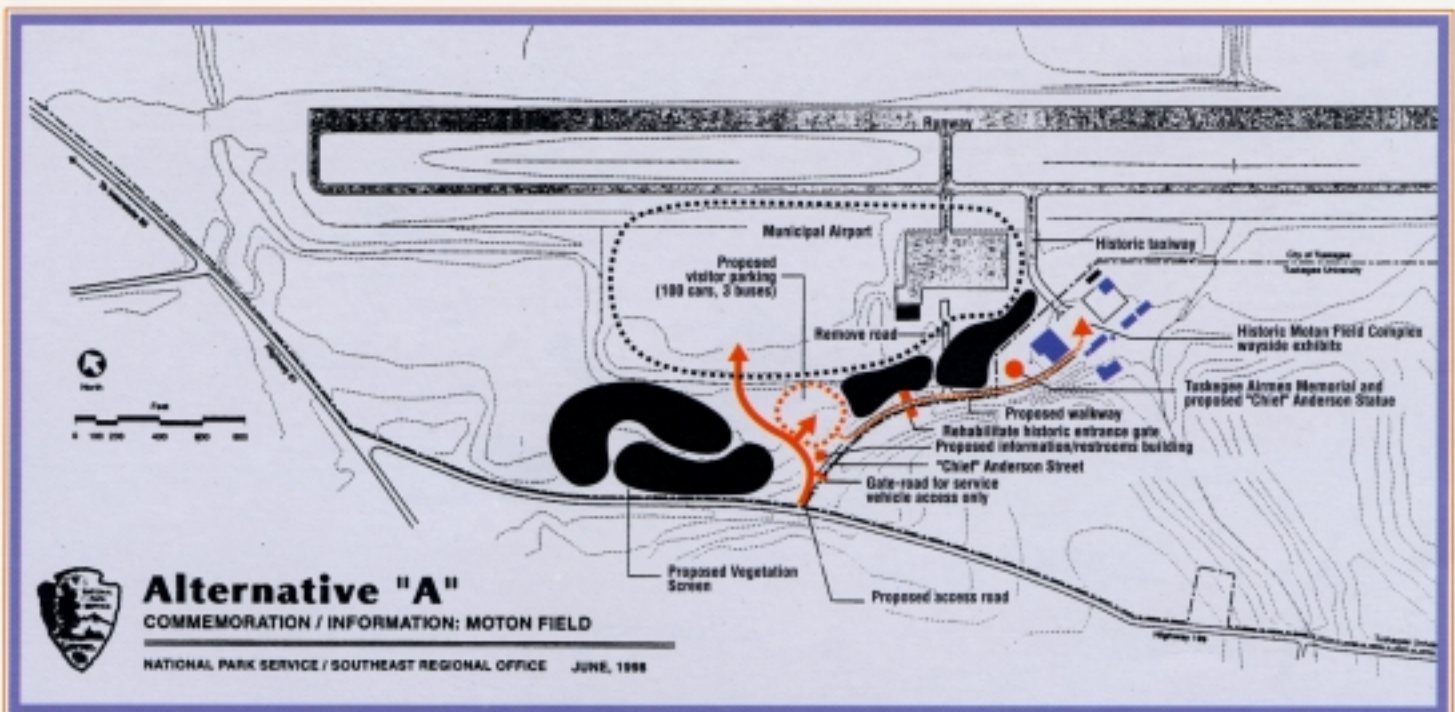
- Visitor parking (City of Tuskegee and Tuskegee University).
- Information—orientation building (Tuskegee University, public and private funds).
- Other development and stabilization of historic buildings (Private).

## Land Ownership

- Tuskegee University and City of Tuskegee

## Cost of Facility Construction

Total \$4,658,160





# ALTERNATIVE B—COMMEMORATION/INTERPRETATION: TUSKEGEE AIRMEN & MOTON FIELD

## Visitor Experience

- Passive commemoration
- Informal interpretation

## Interpretive Emphasis

- Focus on training process for Tuskegee Airmen at Moton Field.

## Historic Building Complex

- Rehabilitation of Hangar #1 and Control Tower.
- Stabilization of historic buildings. (6).
- "Ghost" framework for sites of former historic buildings. (4).

## Interpretive Facilities / Tools

- Hangar #1 — visitor contact and exhibits with historic photos, replicas of training aircraft.
- Self-guiding brochure, other publications and wayside exhibits.
- Chappie James Museum — exhibits on broader story of Tuskegee Airmen.

## Portion of Tuskegee Airmen Story Told Through Moton Field Resources and Facilities

- 20-30 percent.
- Visitor understanding of rest of story dependent on written publications and limited exhibits at rehabilitated Chappie James Museum (Tuskegee University).

## Management / Operation

National Park Service

## Construction of Facilities

- Visitor parking (City of Tuskegee and Tuskegee University).
- Other facilities and preservation of historic resources (NPS).

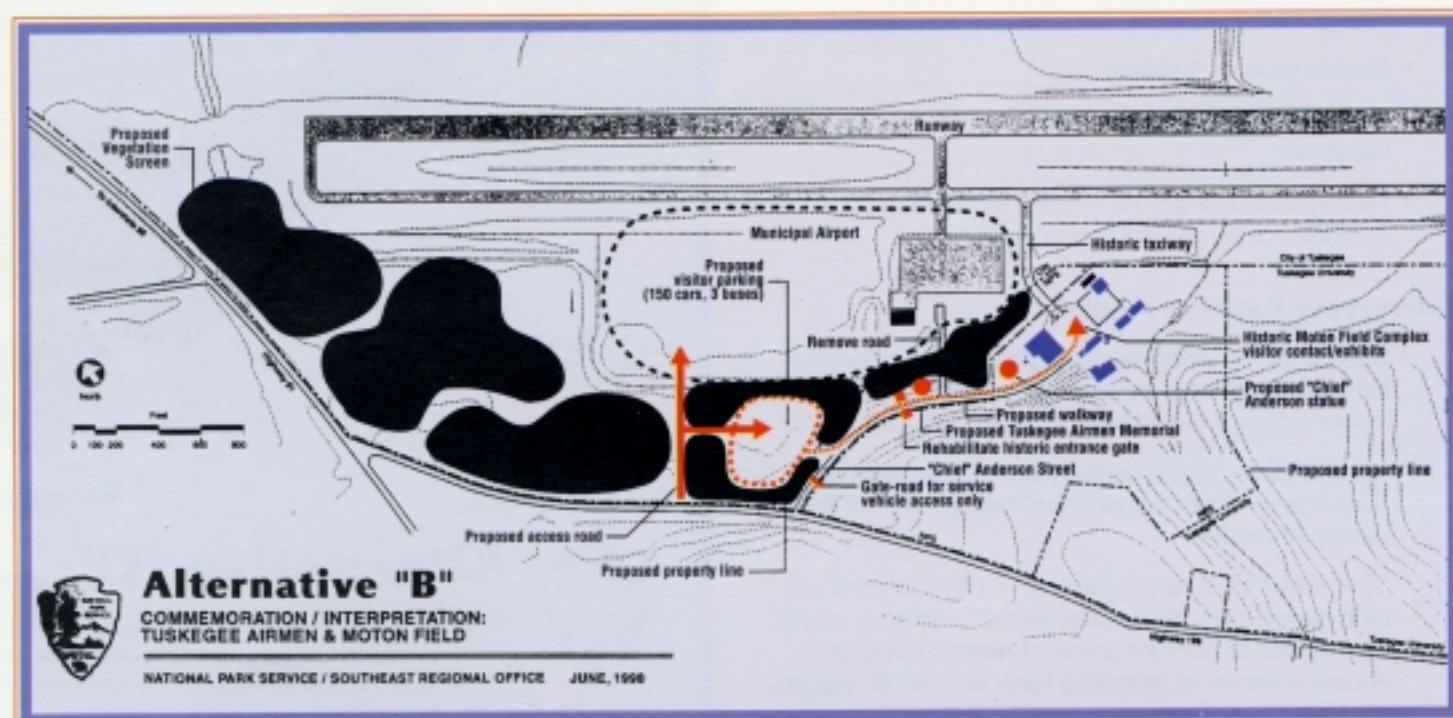
## Land Ownership

National Park Service acquire via donation:

- 5 acres from City of Tuskegee.
- 33 acres from Tuskegee University.

## Cost of Facility Construction

Total \$11,641,071





# ALTERNATIVE C—LIVING HISTORY: TUSKEGEE AIRMEN EXPERIENCE

## Visitor Experience

- Formal interpretation
- Active — diverse media, exhibits, NPS staff interpretive services

## Interpretive Emphasis

Focus on broad story of Tuskegee Airmen in addition to Moton Field including:

- Introduction to story highlighting history of African Americans in the U.S. military.
- The training process for the Tuskegee Airmen and the strategic role of Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) in that training.
- Impacts of Tuskegee Airmen during World War II.
- Integration of the military.
- Time line showing other events in U.S. during same time period.

## Historic Building Complex

- Rehabilitation of Hangar #1, Control Tower, Warehouse/Vehicle Storage Building (proposed NPS maintenance facility), Locker Building (proposed NPS administrative functions), All Ranks Club (proposed food service concession).
- Stabilization — 3 sheds
- "Ghost" framework — sites of 4 former historic buildings.
- Reconstruct Hangar #2 — New structure with exterior closely resembling original.

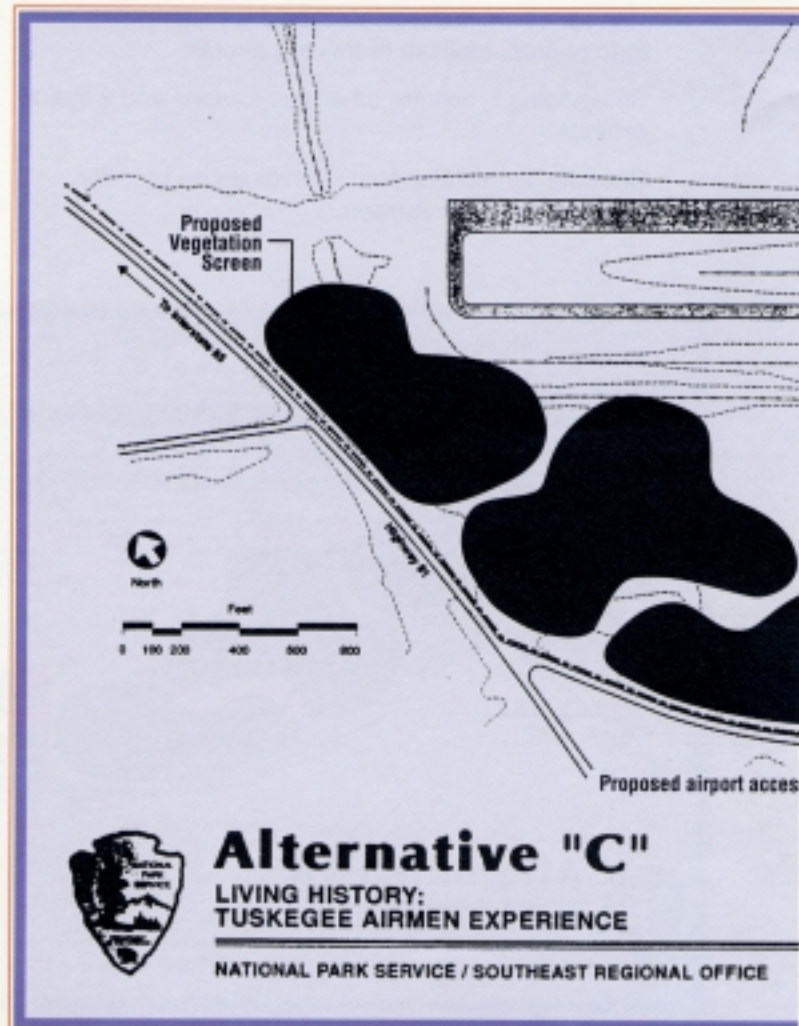
## Interpretive Facilities /Tools

- Hangar #1 — Living history exhibits and programs focusing on airmen training and equipment (i.e., link trainer), period furnishings including aircraft.
- Hangar #2 — Visitor center/museum, exhibits on "Tuskegee Airmen Experience" beyond Moton Field, variety of media.
- "Furnished" cultural landscape — Objects from historic period such as combat aircraft, vehicles, signs, etc., added to outdoor areas of historic complex to enhance sense of "stepping back in time" for visitors.
- Wayside exhibits and publications.

## Tuskegee University Component

Opportunity to establish a *Charles Alfred Anderson Department of Aviation Science* within the historic building complex. More than 50 years ago, pilot trainees learned specialized skills at Moton Field. The educational program would provide an added dimension to the visitor experience, allowing visitors to see students learning in the tradition of the Tuskegee Airmen. Pre-college and college level curriculum would be provided, focusing on aviation, math, and science (see Alternative D for additional details).

- Visitor/museum and school program activities would share use of Hangar #2.
- Displayed artifacts and exhibits serve a dual purpose: interpretation and education.
- Hangar #2 — Rooms around perimeter of hangar devoted to classroom and project learning space. Main portion of hangar used for exhibits.





- Students and teachers assist with special interpretive and living history programs as part of curriculum activities.
- Interaction between visitors and students would be an integral part of the experience for both.
- See Alternative D for additional details.

### Portion of Tuskegee Airmen Story Told Through Moton Field Resources, Facilities and Programs

- 60-70 percent.

### Management / Operation

- Historic building complex (NPS)
- Department of Aviation Science (Tuskegee University)

### Construction of Facilities

- Visitor parking (NPS, Tuskegee University, private and public funds).
- Historic building complex (National Park Service)

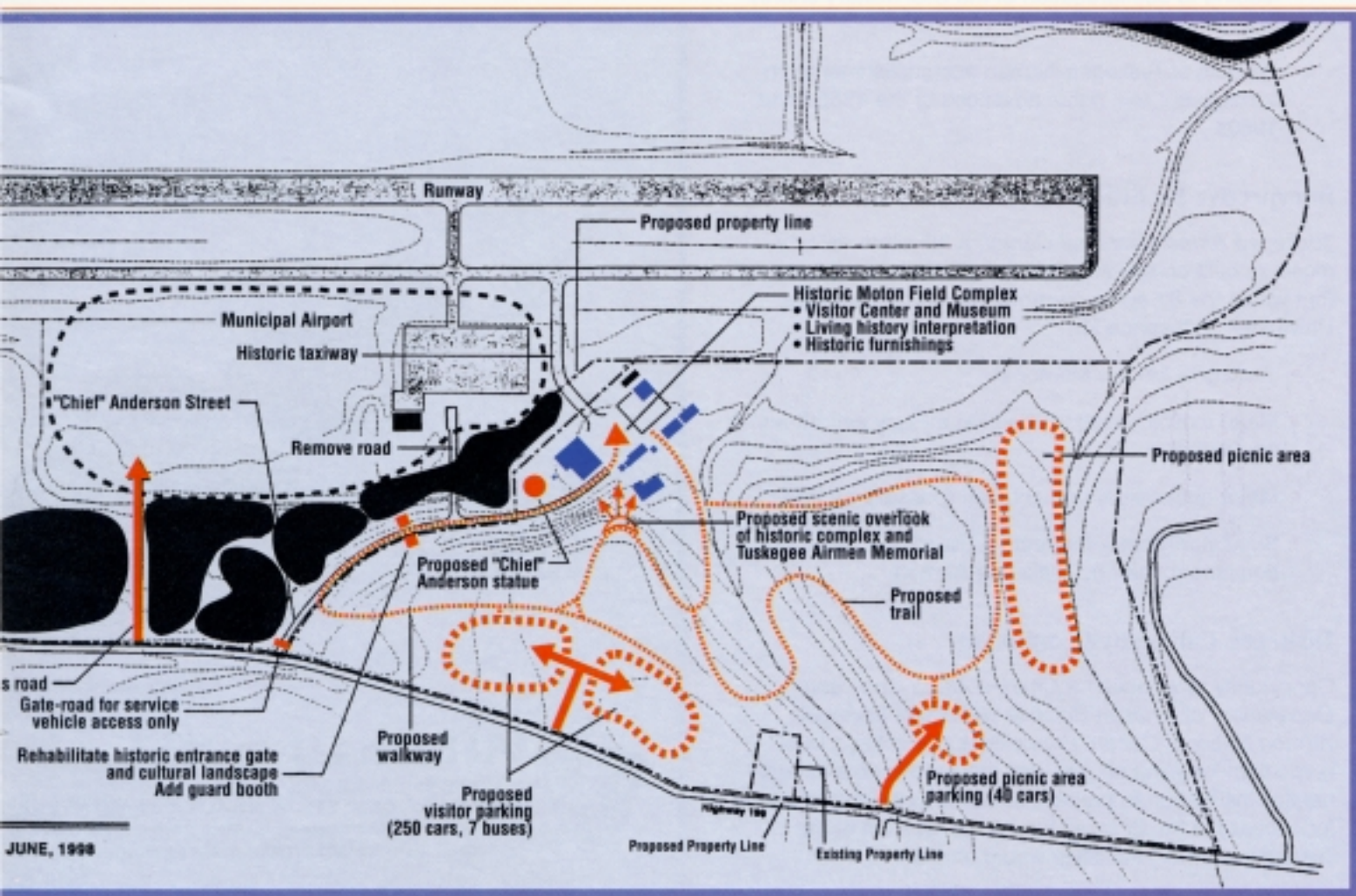
### Land Ownership

National Park Service acquire via donation:

- 6.7 acres (City of Tuskegee)
- 81 acres (Tuskegee University)

### Cost of Facility Construction

**Total \$23,671,136**





# ALTERNATIVE D—TUSKEGEE AIRMEN NATIONAL CENTER: A HISTORICAL CONTINUUM

Same as Alternative C, except for the following:

## Interpretive Emphasis

The continuing legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen would be presented in the context of African-American participation in the U.S. military with broad elements of the story presented through exhibits and programs at Moton Field:

- Past, present and future of military aviation and training.
- African-American struggle for greater participation in the U.S. military and more significant roles in defending their country.
- Strategic role of Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) in the training of the Tuskegee Airmen.
- Significance of successes of the Tuskegee Airmen in leading to desegregation of the U.S. military shortly after World War II.
- Impacts of Tuskegee Airmen accomplishments on subsequent civil rights advances of the 1950s and 1960s.

## Interpretive Facilities/Tools

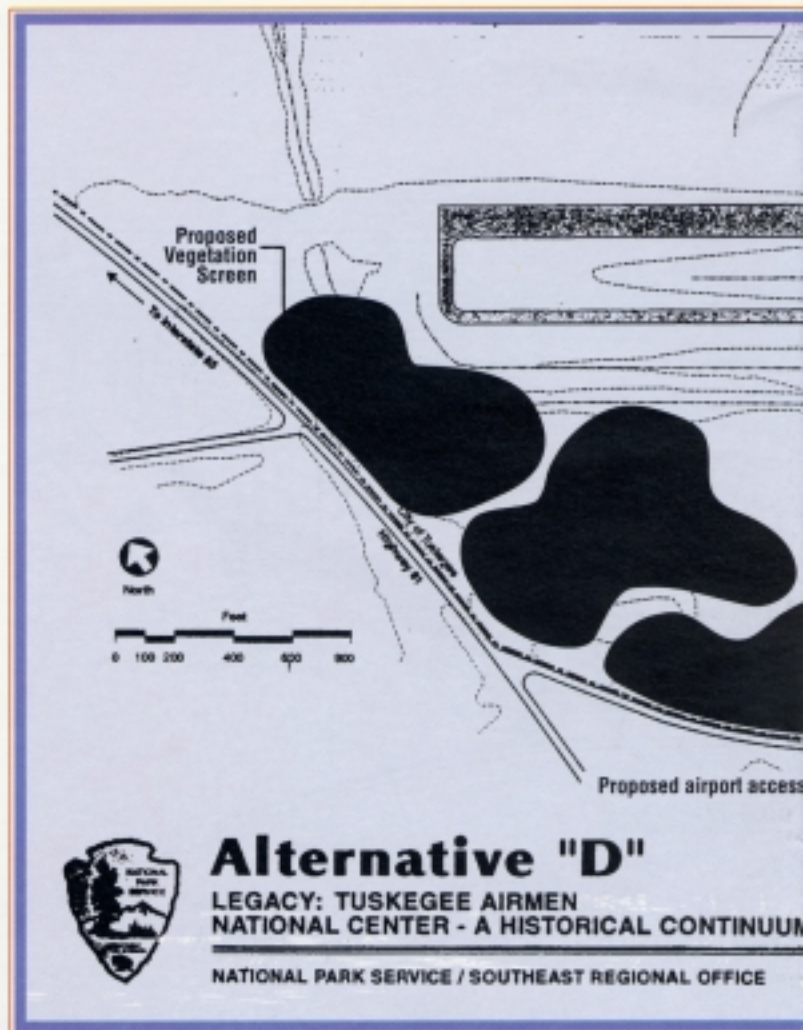
*Tuskegee Airmen National Center*, a full-scale military museum built on site separate from historic complex (but within the 81 acres currently owned by Tuskegee University) with space for:

- Tuskegee Airmen Memorial.
- Major exhibit space with period military aircraft and equipment.
- Major audiovisual presentation (possibly an IMAX).
- Simulator room—Interactive, "hands-on" replicas of equipment used by Tuskegee Airmen.

## Tuskegee University Component

Opportunity to establish a *Charles Alfred Anderson Department of Aviation Science* within the *Tuskegee Airmen National Center*. Pre-college and college level curriculum focusing on aviation, math, science and aeronautics instruction to prepare students to meet challenges for success in the 21st century in the tradition of the Tuskegee Airmen. Facilities would provide:

- A highly competitive aviation-training center providing pilot training, and education in airport management and safety, meteorology, air traffic control, maintenance and other technical specialties for people in the Tuskegee University region.
- Education and training center for aviation research. A national repository with high-tech computers and worldwide computer access. Enhancement of Tuskegee University's existing program in aerospace engineering.
- Expansion of Tuskegee University's Department of Continuing Education programs including Aviation Youth Camps, lecture series by Tuskegee Airmen and biannual flight reviews for licensed pilots. Adult outreach also to provide knowledge and skills to obtain airframe and power plant license approved by Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).





- Increased utilization of Kellogg Center and other facilities on Tuskegee University campus including Chapple James Museum, which would be renovated to provide for interpretation of campus sites and buildings linked with the "Tuskegee Airmen Experience."
- Potential student-visitor interface programs.

## Visitor Experience

Highly active and interactive

## Portion of Tuskegee Airmen Story Told Through Moton Field Resources, Facilities & Programs

- 80-90 percent

## Construction of Facilities

- Tuskegee Airmen National Center \*
- Visitor parking (NPS, other public agencies and Tuskegee University)
- Historic building complex (NPS)

## Management / Operation

- Historic building complex (NPS)
- Department of Aviation Science (Tuskegee University)
- Tuskegee Airmen National Center \*

## Land Ownership

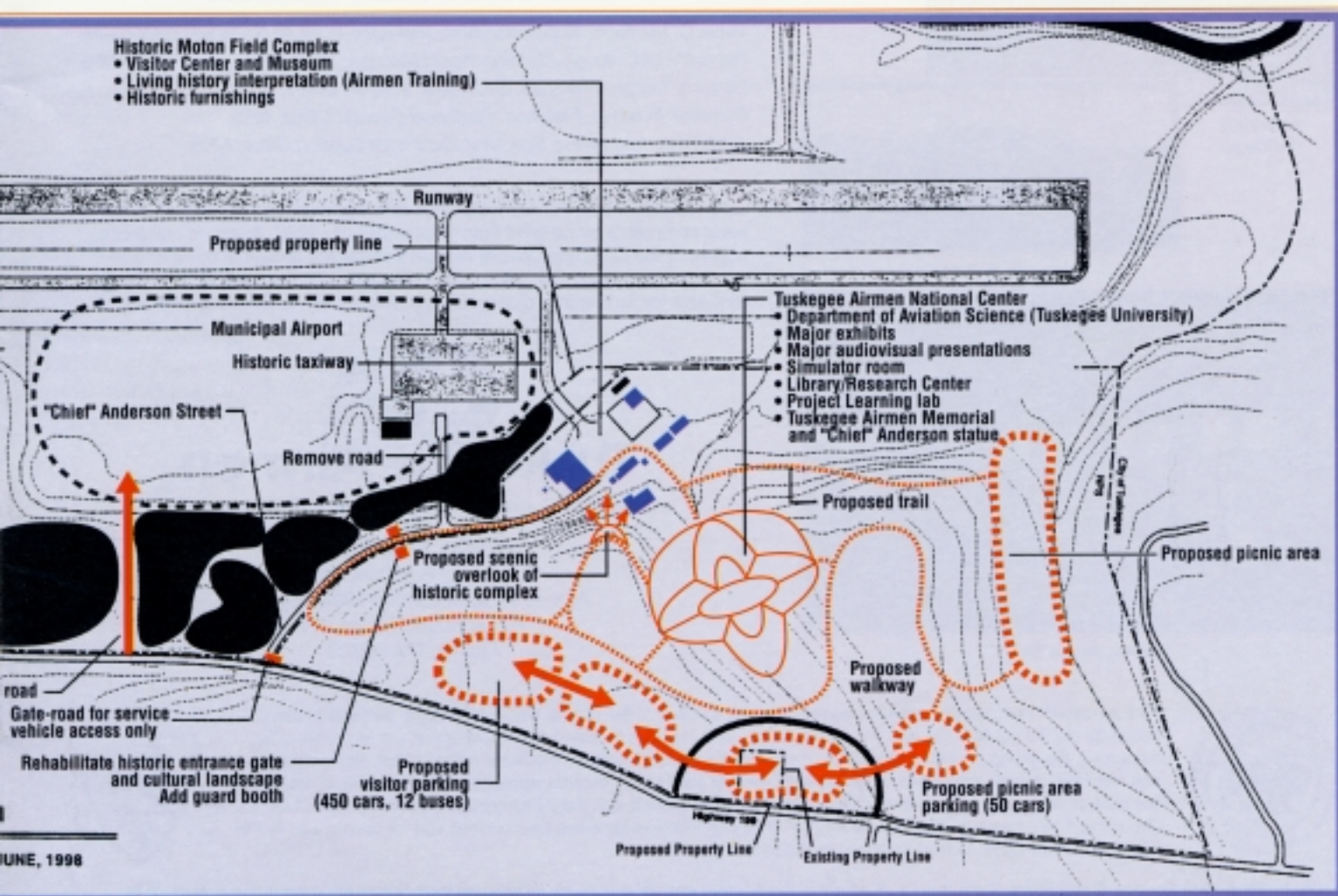
National Park Service acquire via donation:

- 6.7 acres (City of Tuskegee)
- 81 acres (Tuskegee University)

## Cost of Facility Construction

- Tuskegee Airmen National Center — \$20,000,000 - 35,000,000
- Other Facilities — \$23,671,136

\*see note on back cover





## CURRENT PHOTOS



Moton Field, Hangar No. 1



Moton Field  
Buildings



Hangar No. 1 (Rear View)



Interior, Hangar No. 1

### Alternative D (Continued)

A public/private partnership on a national level will be needed to raise funds, construct and operate the Tuskegee Airmen National Center. A national fund-raising campaign would involve the Tuskegee Airmen, Tuskegee University, retired and active military personnel, private corporations (especially the aircraft industry), private foundations and others. Development and operation of the facility would involve one or more federal agencies. These federal partners may include the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Education, Federal Aviation Administration, NASA, NPS and other agencies. NPS involvement would emphasize the agency's primary responsibility of telling the story of the Tuskegee Airmen.

## IMPACTS

The complete study contains an analysis of impacts of the several alternatives. Impacts of each concept are addressed based on issues such as visitor experience, cultural resources, natural resources, and the socioeconomic environment.

## CORE STUDY TEAM MEMBERS

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The National Park Service welcomes all comments on this study. Please send comments by no later than September 21, 1998. A limited number of copies of the complete special resource study are available by writing to the Southeast Regional Office of the National Park Service. Comments or requests for further information should be sent to the following address:



## Tuskegee Airmen

Moton Field/Tuskegee Airmen Special Resource Study

### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office  
Atlanta Federal Center-1924 Building  
100 Alabama Street SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303



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